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To: Members, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources  
From: C. Philip Byers, Rutherford County Sheriff (North Carolina)  
Date: April 11, 2006  
Re: "Appalachian Ice: The Methamphetamine Epidemic in Western North Carolina"

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On July 26, 2005, I had the privilege of addressing the members of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources. During my testimony, I made several recommendations to include the following:

- 1) Restrict the sell of pseudoephedrine products nationally
- 2) Tighten the Mexican border to help prevent methamphetamine traffickers from entering the United States
- 3) Longer prison sentences for methamphetamine traffickers and methamphetamine producers and anyone who involves children in the trade or allows children to reside in a home used for methamphetamine production
- 4) Address the pseudoephedrine black market (Canada and China)
- 5) Funding for "Interstate Drug and Criminal Interdiction Teams"
- 6) Continue to prosecute methamphetamine manufacturers in the Federal Court System (Longer Sentences)
- 7) Work with mental health care providers to develop a better recovery and treatment plan for those with meth addiction

With the passing of the Patriot Act Legislation earlier this year, the "Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005" became law and provides the following:

- 1) Restricts the sale of medicines containing pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, and phenylpropanolamine to make meth by placing the ingredients behind the counter and limiting how much one person can buy to 9grams/month and 3.6 grams/day.
- 2) Creates a new DEA classification for meth precursors while allowing legitimate consumers to access the medicines they need without a prescription.
- 3) Provides an additional \$99 million/year for the next five years under the Meth Hot Spots program to train state and local law enforcement to investigate and lock-up meth offenders and expand funding available for personnel and equipment, prosecution and environmental clean-up.
- 4) Requires new reporting and certification procedures of the largest exporting and importing countries of pseudoephedrine, ephedrine, and PPA.
- 5) Provides \$20 million in grant funding in 2006 and 2007 for Drug Endangered Children rapid response teams to promote collaboration among federal, state, and local agencies to assist and educate children that have been affected by the production of methamphetamine.
- 6) Requires reports to Congress on agency designations of by-products of meth labs as hazardous materials and waste.
- 7) Enhances criminal penalties for meth production and trafficking.

As a result of the passing of the “Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005 and the North Carolina Methamphetamine Lab Prevention Act of 2005, we have already witnessed a reduction in methamphetamine labs in Western North Carolina. During the month of March, 2006, 14 labs were discovered in North Carolina compared to 40 in March of 2005 and 33 labs in March of 2004. First quarter lab seizures for North Carolina compares as follows:

2006	January, February, and March	73 labs
2005	January, February, and March	108 labs
2004	January, February, and March	81 labs

Methamphetamine lab responses in Western North Carolina in 2006 through March 31, by county:

Rutherford	14
McDowell	12
Madison	2
Haywood	2
Watauga	1
Mitchell	1
Jackson	1

We are beginning to experience limited successes in fighting local meth labs but the overall methamphetamine trafficking and addiction problem continues to grow. In Rutherford County, we have fewer meth labs but increased methamphetamine trafficking and addiction. The majority of methamphetamine (ice) that we seize today is smuggled into this country from Mexico. The methamphetamine (ice) that comes from “Mexican Super Labs” is very potent and leads our users to a new level of addiction. As we continue to fight the Methamphetamine Epidemic in this country, I once again wish to share my suggestions and recommendations to this committee.

- 1) We must tighten the control of the Mexican border and reduce the amount of meth (ice) that continues to pour into our country
- 2) We must continue to work with Federal Prosecutors to prosecute meth manufacturing and trafficking cases in Federal Court
- 3) Continue funding “Interstate Drug and Criminal Interdiction Teams”
- 4) Work with and provide additional funding for mental health care providers to develop a solid treatment and recovery plan
- 5) Fund the North Carolina Statewide Methamphetamine Taskforce

This information is based on my experience dealing with methamphetamine labs and the struggles that I have witnessed. I hope a small portion of this information will help to develop a better system of fighting what continues to negatively impact the local governments in Western North Carolina. I thank you for the work you are doing and I will be happy to address any questions or comments.